



EXHIBIT 9  
DATE 2-12-07  
HB 9

**Pondera Arts Council's Grant**

*Original Request \$20,000*

*Recommendation \$5,000 (a decrease of \$15,000)*

*Category: Operational Support – Funding for Concerts, Manager's Salary, Utilities & Insurance for the Performing Arts Center Building, etc.*

The Pondera Arts Council wishes to thank The Montana Arts Council for its valuable past support in funding various projects. PAC bought the Orpheum Theatre in Conrad for \$25,000 in 2001. Replacement value is now \$500,000! *This arts council is the only one in Montana that maintains a building and a concert series in a town of only 2500 people.* Other small towns use tax-supported school auditoriums, etc.

In a time of declining jobs in Conrad, PAC is boosting the economy by providing employment opportunities. The Arts Council brings quality entertainment such as The Vienna Boys Choir, which performed there last spring. The impact of the Pondera Arts Council's involvement in the Conrad community is dynamic and steadily growing. It brings current weekend movies and monthly "art movies" to the theatre—and Conrad.

Pondera Arts Council is now faced with the loss of approximately \$15,000 from its projected budget for 2008-09 because of the large decrease in PAC's grant request. PAC will receive \$2500 each year. This is only enough to fund one group such as the Missoula Children's Theatre, which is producing "The Little Mermaid" next weekend, February 17th. PAC has sponsored 8 or more concerts each of the past two years to provide cultural enjoyment and enrichment to our area. Many other events take place in this performing arts center. These are awesome accomplishments! The council is now planning to add air conditioning and a marquee to the building. In a county of only 6700 people, this will be a huge challenge requiring approximately \$40,000 in funding. PAC will be pursuing other grants and local support for these projects.

As president of Pondera Arts Council, I recently sent the legislators on the Long Range Planning Committee two emails detailing PAC's situation. I asked them to *support HB-9 and SB-284* concerning bed tax and Montana Arts Council budget funding. *I am now requesting this again.* I further am asking and imploring this committee to find additional funding to add to available funding for the arts everywhere in Montana (added to the Montana Cultural Trust). This is a must. I truly believe you have the power and hopefully the will to do this. It will take a lot of determination, interest, time, and dedication to convince the other legislators of the merits of our cause. What better way could a small amount of the large surplus be used?

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted by:

Helen Elliott

PAC President